



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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Fact Sheet

USCIS: Enhancing National Security

Maintaining the integrity of our immigration system is our first and most critical priority. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has a vital national security role within the Department of Homeland Security - keeping our doors open, but well guarded.

USCIS national security efforts are ongoing. We continually adapt to potential threats to enhance the security of our immigration system and stamp out fraud and abuse. To this end, USCIS has created the *National Security and Records Verification* Directorate (NSRV) to merge all national security functions under one roof. NSRV ensures that investigative resources are strategically positioned to deliver services internally to other USCIS offices and externally to other DHS components and federal and local law enforcement entities. This newly created Directorate includes the USCIS Fraud Detection and National Security (FDNS) Division, Records Division and the Verification Division.

FDNS handles all USCIS' intelligence work, fraud detection and national security cases. Since 2003, USCIS has mandated that every applicant undergo a national security and background check. We have also expanded the range of applicants required to submit fingerprints and other biometrics at USCIS Application Support Centers. Each day, USCIS employees complete more than 135,000 security and background checks. These critical measures have reduced fraud and abuse and have deterred and removed individuals who pose a threat to our communities.

Mission and Structure of FDNS

The mission of FDNS is to enhance the integrity of the legal immigration system by identifying threats to national security and public safety, detecting and combating benefit fraud and removing systemic and other vulnerabilities. FDNS will enhance national security and the integrity of our legal immigration system by:

- Ensuring that background checks are conducted on 135,000 cases each day.
- Detecting, pursuing and deterring immigration benefit fraud.
- Performing as USCIS' primary conduit to and from the law enforcement and intelligence agencies.
- Identifying and removing systemic and other vulnerabilities that compromise the integrity of the legal immigration system.

FDNS consists of nearly 400 immigration officers, intelligence research specialists, senior adjudications officers and analysts throughout USCIS Headquarters and the field. There are four branches within FDNS: Policy Development and Analysis; Fraud Detection Operations; National Security; and the Intelligence Division. Some of the primary responsibilities of FDNS branches that enhance our security every day include:

- Developing fraud detection and national security policies and procedures.
- Conducting benefit fraud assessments to determine fraud rates, causes and solutions.
- Providing first-line supervision of Fraud Detection Units in USCIS field offices.
- Overseeing the resolution of all background check hits and adjudication of cases with national security implications.
- Developing anti-fraud courses and training for FDNS field staff.
- Coordinating with other federal and local enforcement and intelligence agencies to ensure the integrity of our legal immigration benefits system.

FDNS Collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement

FDNS is also collaborating with U.S. Immigrations & Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Identity and Benefit Fraud Unit on a joint strategy aimed at detecting and combating immigration benefit fraud and identifying and removing aliens who pose a threat to national security and public safety. Cooperation between FDNS and ICE has helped to improve the incidence of enforcement actions:

- Document and benefit fraud investigations have increased from 2,334 in FY 2004 to 3,591 in FY 2005.
- Criminal indictments in benefit fraud investigations have increased from 767 to 875.
- Arrests have risen from 1,300 to 1,391 cases.
- Convictions have increased from 559 to 992 cases.

Through the development of FDNS and its collaboration with other government partners, USCIS is remaining steadfast in its commitment to protect our national security.

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) became one of three former INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.